

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2600

April 15, 2013

Mr. Howard Cantor
Acting Regional Administrator
United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region VIII, 8P-AR
1595 Wynkoop St.
Denver, CO 80202-1129
RE: Montana Sulfur Dioxide (SO₂) NAAQS Designations
Docket ID Number EPA-HQ-OAR-2012-0233

Dear Mr. Cantor,

I am writing to express my strong support for the state of Montana in assigning an "unclassifiable" designation for the new sulfur dioxide (SO₂) National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) in Yellowstone County until a full set of representative and reliable data can be compiled and reviewed.

As you know, Yellowstone County is home to two power plants, three oil refineries, a sugar beet plant and a sulfur-recovery plant. These industries employ thousands of Montanans who depend on a healthy local economy and regulatory certainty.

In 2010, the EPA promulgated a new, stricter short-term NAAQS for SO₂. Between 2009 and 2011, Yellowstone County ambient air monitoring sites recorded data on sulfur dioxide levels, and in all but one location, the data clearly met the new SO₂ NAAQS. The location with some problematic results was the Coburn Road monitor, located 2 ¼ miles east of downtown Billings atop Sacrifice Cliff. I believe this monitoring site has provided non-representative data that should be reevaluated and reconsidered.

During the year 2010, several factors contributed to this variance in data. Furthermore, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality has stated that in 2009, 2011 and 2012 "the reports represented similar and consistent operating conditions that reflect future operations and clearly establish a trend maintaining the NAAQS"

I support the comments and recommendation by the Montana Governor's office dated April 3, 2013 for an "unclassifiable" designation for Yellowstone County. Please feel free to contact me with any comments or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Daines". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Steve" and last name "Daines" clearly distinguishable.

Steve Daines
Member of Congress